Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT LINCOLN ACADEMY February 26, 2008

The attached report contains the results of the first two phases (Self-Assessment Process and On-Site Validation Visit) of the Utah Special Education Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS). This Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process is conducted by the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) Special Education Services (SES), as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B. The process is designed to focus resources on improving results for students with disabilities through enhanced partnerships between charter school and district programs, USOE-SES, the Utah Personnel Development Center, parents, and advocates.

The first phase of this process included the development of a Program Improvement Plan. The second phase, On-Site Validation, conducted in Lincoln Academy on December 4-5, 2007, included student record reviews, interviews with school administrators, teachers, and parents. Parent surveys were also mailed to a small sample of parents.

This report contains a more complete description of the process utilized to collect data and to determine strengths, areas out of compliance with the requirements of IDEA, and recommendations for improvement in each of the core IDEA areas.

Areas of Strength

The validation team found the following:

General Supervision

- The self review of the student IEP files was a positive learning experience for those who
 participated.
- The file review results indicated areas that need improvement and gave instant insight to the teachers.
- A procedure has been implemented to continually correct any compliance issue found with IEPs through a monitoring system.
- The teaching team has been solidified with the hiring of a new teacher to bring the caseload into compliance.
- The teachers were involved in all aspects of the file reviews.
- Students suspected of having a learning disability are referred and evaluated according to state and federal regulations.
- General education teachers have a high level of understanding of the evaluation process.
- All forms are in compliance with state and federal requirements.
- All Child Find activities are in compliance with state and federal requirements.
- All identification and evaluation tools and materials are in compliance with state and federal requirements.
- School staff meets as a team, to review evaluation results and determine eligibility for students with disabilities within required timelines.
- Files are maintained in locked file cabinets and contained records of access.
- Consistent file organization utilized and special education teachers understand minimum content requirements.
- Special education staff are willing to learn, accept suggestions for improvement and are eager to make their files compliant.
- Students reported special education teachers and general education teachers care about them and help them to succeed.
- Special education teachers provide in-service for general education teachers at the beginning of each school year on child find procedures.
- Summer in-service held for all teachers to learn about disability categories.
- I-Excell during school program is available for students to meet with teachers to complete missing homework
- Special education teachers email general education teachers on a weekly basis to remind general education teachers of student accommodations to be provided in the general education class. General education teachers are aware of student needs, as reported by parents.

- STEP (Student Teacher Enhancement Program) program identifies students in crisis and works to identify the reason.
- Well trained staff and faculty are willing to work with students to help students succeed.
- All initial evaluation timelines were met.
- Paraprofessionals are included in ongoing professional development and are properly supervised.
- Classroom teachers have a copy of the IEP and list of accommodations for each special education student in their classroom.
- Evaluations were generally comprehensive, utilized a variety of assessments and assessed all areas of concern.
- The school building is a welcoming environment; positive interactions between staff and students were observed. The special education classroom environment includes a themed classroom behavior management plan.
- Ongoing collaboration and communication occurs between general education teachers and special education staff.

Parent Involvement

- Parents are generally pleased with their child's progress and with the IEP that has been developed by the team.
- Parents are considered a vital part of the team and participate in all decisions made by the IEP team.
- Parents seem supportive of the school and the special education department.
- The results of the surveys with students, regular education teachers, special education teachers, itinerant personnel and principal seemed to match the same results as to parent involvement at the school.
- Parents took an active role in the UPIPS process and were willing to help in any way needed.
- The staff concluded, as did the parents, that the school was making an effort to involve them in all aspects of the child's education.
- Parents are very active in supporting the school and the special education program through donating time, supplies, materials, rewards, etc.
- Parents are notified of their rights to an independent evaluation at no cost to the parents.
- Consent for evaluation is documented prior to conducting the evaluation.
- Parents are provided with written prior notice of proposed activities, including evaluation, eligibility determination, IEP implementation, and placement.
- Procedural Safeguards are provided and explained to parents at least annually, as documented in special education files and parent reports. School staff, when interviewed, were knowledgeable regarding contents of the Procedural Safeguards.
- Parents report receiving copies of evaluation summary reports, eligibility determinations, and IEPs. This was also documented during the file reviews.
- Parent input is sought after and documented in the special education files. Parents also reported that the school asks for their input in many ways.
- IEPs document that the IEP team has considered and determined how and when parents will receive reports of student progress on IEP goals. Parents also reported during the parent focus group that their student is making progress towards IEP goals.
- Parent involvement is high in Lincoln Academy. Parents volunteer at the school and participate in committees, including the UPIPS Stakeholder Steering Committee.
- Parents report a high rate of communication between home and school via in person or email.
 They also stated that the school facilitates their involvement as a means of improving services for their student with disabilities.
- Parents stated that they suggest goals for their student's IEPs.
- Parents were very happy with the special education services provided at Lincoln Academy.
- IEPs are scheduled at mutually agreeable times.

Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- The team (including parents) develops IEPs with the focus on the individual child.
- The LEA plays a vital role in the IEP process.

- Students are being educated with their non-disabled peers and attend regular classes and are a part of all school and extra-curricular activities.
- All students have been welcomed to the charter school and accommodations have been afforded to all students.
- All IEPs are current and included in special education files.
- PLAAFP statements included current data and how the disability affects the students' involvement and progress in the general curriculum.
- IEP goals were measurable and addressed all areas of student need.
- IEPs included a listing of special education and related services, as well as the location and amount of services needed.
- Special factors were considered and documented. Extended school year (ESY) is considered for each students with disabilities; the team decision regarding the need for ESY is documented on the IEP annually.
- Special education services begin as soon as possible following the IEP meeting.
- Decisions regarding student placement is made by the IEP team. Placement discussions begin at the general education classroom progress up the continuum as needed.
- IEPs are developed collaboratively with all required team members.
- During classroom observations, the provision of specialized instruction, which correlated with the IEP services and goals, was observed.
- Students, when interviewed, could describe the purpose of an IEP, attended their IEPs, and said that they have benefited from the special education and accommodations they receive.
- Parents reported that their students consistently receive the IEP services and accommodations in general education and special education classrooms.
- Physical education is available for all students at Lincoln Academy, regardless of disability.

Transitions

- This area was not applicable at the time of the Self-Assessment Report, since Lincoln was a K-8 school.
- Special education teachers and the counselor discuss needed high school courses with the IEP team for 8th and 9th grade students.
- School staff assist in transitioning students to their new high school at the end of the 9th grade year.

Disproportionality

• When compared to local populations and state average data, students at Lincoln Academy are classified following both state and school policies, resulting in average numbers of classifications by disability categories and ethnicity.

Areas of Systemic Noncompliance*

- Reevaluations not completed within 3 years.
- Evaluation and Eligibility: Review of existing data not completed; Evaluation Procedures not followed:
 - Specific Learning Disabilities the relevant behavior noted during the observation was not documented.
 - Speech Language Impairment For students whose primary home language is other than English, the team did not determine that the impairment exists in the student's primary language.
 - Speech Language Impairment Multiple measures, formal and informal, not documented.
- School to Post-School Transition: Post-secondary goals for training/education and employment not documented; Transition services, focused on improving the academic achievement of the student to facilitate movement from school to post-school not documented; Course of study not documented; Age appropriate transition assessments not documented.

^{*}These areas represent items where the visiting team could not locate appropriate documentation of requirements of IDEA 2004 and Utah State Special Education Rules in student records or other data sources.